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INFO RUCNARF/ASEAN REGIONAL FORUM COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
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RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 1150
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SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: Indonesia - US Interfaith Dialogue: A Cairo Initiative
Success Story

1. (U) This message is Sensitive but Unclassified. Please handle accordingly.

2. (SBU) SUMMARY: The January 25-27 Indonesia-U.S. Interfaith Dialogue, the first of its kind under President Obama's Cairo vision, concluded with the issuance of a joint statement that calls on the U.S. and Indonesian governments and international religious and multi-religious organizations to move from conferences to community action. The agreement highlighted four key areas where interfaith cooperation would be most effective: 1) eradicating poverty, 2) combatting climate change, 3) improving education, and 4) promoting good governance. Our media strategy and engagement with participants that crossed religious, national, gender, age and socio-economic boundaries can serve as a model for future dialogues. Press coverage was extensive and positive. Transcript of the joint statement is attached. END SUMMARY.

Interfaith Dialogue Resounding Success

3. (SBU) On January 25-27, the Indonesian government hosted the first bilateral interfaith working group event under the Cairo Initiative. The event focused on building communities through interfaith work as a component of the Comprehensive Partnership. The U.S. delegation was lead by Pradeep Ramamurthy, senior director of global engagement for the NSC. Ari Alexander represented the White House Office of Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships. In the opening statements both the Foreign Minister Natalegawa and Ramamurthy expressed the hope that this conference would lead to actionable programs in line with the goals of our Comprehensive Partnership.

Public Outreach Strategy

4. (SBU) Working closely with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (KEMLU), we developed and implemented an innovative media strategy, which included live streaming of the opening and closing ceremonies for the conference and a webchat. It was the first live streaming at a KEMLU event. The webchat featured Zeenat Rahman of the Interfaith Youth Core in Chicago and alumni of U.S. exchange programs and drew participants from across Asia, including Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Egypt, Kyrgyzstan, Malaysia, Pakistan, and the Philippines. Press coverage was straightforward and positive. It included publication of a number of photos of participants and five exclusives with three leading newspapers with a combined circulation of 320,000. The Director General for Information and Public Diplomacy Andri Hadi said this forum received

far greater press coverage than any other interfaith dialogue in the past.

Participants Key to Follow-On Activities

¶5. (SBU) Both the Embassy and KEMLU invited a number of university students and interfaith activists engaged in interfaith tolerance efforts to participate. Many of these unofficial participants expressed their eagerness to help take the recommendations and turn them into concrete actions. Discussions are already underway with KEMLU to identify possible areas of future collaboration and partnership. The agreement highlighted four key areas where interfaith cooperation would be most effective: 1) eradicating poverty, 2) combatting climate change, 3) improving education, and 4) promoting good governance.

¶6. (U) The text of the joint declaration is as follows:

Shared Concerns and Commitments
Indonesia-US Interfaith Cooperation Forum
27 January 2010
Jakarta, Indonesia

Introduction:

We-religious leaders and other civil society actors from the Republic of Indonesia and the United States of America-are committed to taking common action on urgent challenges that confront us all. These challenges respect no borders. They leave us, finally, only as secure as the least secure among us. Even as we acknowledge our own complicity in and responsibility for these challenges, we are motivated by our respective diverse religious and other heritages

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which also tell us that we can and must act together.

We are grateful to the government of the Republic of Indonesia for hosting us in Jakarta and for its partnership with the government of the United States in supporting our commitments for common action. We are convinced that principled program partnerships by diverse religious communities, other civil society actors, and governments are essential to confront today's challenges.

In our bilateral dialogue, we also are grateful for the presence and contributions of regional participants from Cambodia, Japan, Malaysia, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, and Thailand.

Shared Concerns:

Respectful of our religious and cultural differences, and informed by our mutual experiences of diversity, we are united around the following concerns. We believe these concerns present common challenges and responsibilities to each of us and our communities:

Poverty: Vast numbers of the human family are trapped in unprecedented structural poverty and denied the basic means to work their way out of it. Our religious communities are urgently called to respond to this structural poverty in new ways so as to enhance our communities' already established and valuable practices of charity and philanthropy.

Climate Change: Rapid global warming, pollution, and the depletion of natural resources threaten the foundation of human life and the earth as we know it. Our religious communities are called to protect the integrity of the environment, even while they are also called to advance a just and sustainable development for all.

Education: Within our religiously diverse societies, each community is called to educate its members on the importance of freedom of belief for all and to honor the value of diverse religious contributions to the good of society. Religious communities must equip themselves to work with each other to advance the common good, while retaining their distinct religious identities.

Good Governance: While all institutions, including religious ones, need good governance, we call on all governments to strive to be participatory, accountable, transparent, and equitable. In addition, we urge them to be fully committed to inclusivity and to

the protection of minorities.

Shared Commitments:

We are united in the following commitments:

Ending Poverty:

¶1. Educate our religious communities on the causes of structural poverty and advocate in governmental and intergovernmental forums for its eradication.

¶2. As a complement to the work of specialized religiously-affiliated development agencies, work to engage local religious communities—including women's and youth groups, and schools—in the implementation of grassroots-led development and public health programs.

¶3. Advance multi-religious partnerships, while engaging the public sector, in order to equip local religious communities for such programs.

Protecting the Environment:

¶1. Educate our religious communities on the dangers of climate change and environmental degradation, and advocate in governmental and inter-governmental forums for effective, equitable, and verifiable climate and environmental protection agreements.

¶2. Work to engage our local religious communities—including women's and youth groups, and schools—to advance "green" standards, models, and practices.

¶3. Advance multi-religious partnerships, while engaging the public sector, in order to equip local religious communities for such efforts.

Promoting Education on Religious Diversity and the Common Good:

¶1. Educate our religious communities about religious diversity and its value for the common good. Encourage each religious community to identify and teach from its own text and traditions about the inviolable dignity of others and their freedom of belief and practice.

¶2. Jointly advocate for basic formal education about religious traditions, religious diversity, and their importance for social cohesion; and advance related informal education, placing special priority on women's groups and experiential service programs for youth.

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¶3. Advance multi-religious partnerships to counter religious discrimination, persecution, or humiliation, and to foster respect for diverse religious sensitivities.

Advancing Good Governance:

¶1. Explore the application of the principles of good governance to our own religious institutions.

¶2. Educate our religious communities on the need for good government and advocate for it.

¶3. Advance multi-religious partnerships to educate and equip local religious communities for advocacy for good government.

Facilitating Cooperation:

We are committed to working together across religious communities, with other civil society actors, and with governments in program partnerships.

We believe that a key to good program partnerships on shared objectives is a respect for the unique identities, mandates, and capacities of all partners. In this regard, we believe that religious communities should continue to strengthen multi-religious structures that would serve as appropriate partners with other civil society and government actors.

We also believe that these partnerships can be especially helpful for equipping religious communities to scale up action programs to address shared concerns. We commit ourselves to a joint process to frame an agenda for future actions.

We respectfully call upon the existing Indonesian, American, and international religious and multi-religious bodies to both support us and join us in our commitment to shared action.

We offer deep appreciation for the partnership between the Indonesian and United

States governments to advance our collaboration, and respectfully request as well that they continue to work together with us to advance the common good.

We have begun, and we are all heartened by each other's commitment.

End Transcript.

HUME